

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 14604 01 OF 02 250937 Z

12

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02

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R 250827 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 481

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 14604

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, XF

SUBJECT: FRANCE AND THE PERSIAN GULF

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO & AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: VISIT OF KING FEISAL TO PARIS HAS UNDERSCORED
GROWING FRENCH PREOCCUPATION WITH DEPENDENCE ON PERSIAN GULF
OIL. BECAUSE THIS DEPENDENCE IS OF SEMI- PERMANENT CHARACTER,
FRENCH INTERESTS ARE OF INCREASINGLY VITAL IMPORTANCE, AND FOCUS
OF FRENCH ATTENTION IN MIDDLE EAST SEEMS TO BE SHIFTING TOWARDS
GULF. OVER COMING PERIOD, WE SHOULD ANTICIPATE ACTIVE FRENCH
EFFORT TO PRESERVE ITS INFLUENCE AND ACCESS THROUGH ARMS SALES,
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PAGE 02 PARIS 14604 01 OF 02 250937 Z

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES, AND POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION WITH ARAB VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST. WHILE THIS ACTIVITY MAY CREATE PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF OUR OWN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND CERTAINLY WILL RESULT IN VIGOROUS COMMERCIAL COMPETITION, WE SHARE FUNDAMENTAL INTEREST IN STABILITY IN GULF AND THIS INTEREST SHOULD PROVIDE BASIS FOR FUTURE COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

1. FRENCH DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN PERSIAN GULF OVER LAST FEW MONTHS AS PUBLIC AWARENESS OF WORLD ENERGY CRISIS AND OF FRENCH DEPENDENCE HAS INCREASED. IN 1972 OUT OF TOTAL IMPORTS OF 112 MILLION TONS, 65 MILLION CAME FROM GULF, PRIMARILY SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT (24 AND 15 MILLION TONS RESPECTIVELY), BUT ALSO FROM IRAN, IRAQ AND ABU DHABI. IN SPACE OF FEW WEEKS, DEFENSE MINISTER GALLEY HAS VISITED IRAN AND KING FEISAL HAS HAD STATE VISIT TO PARIS. DEFENSE MINISTER OF ARAB EMIRATES ALSO EXPECTED IN PARIS IN NEAR FUTURE AND EMIR OF KUWAIT THIS AUTUMN.

2. BASIC FRENCH INTERESTS IN AREA PARALLEL OUR OWN: POLITICAL STABILITY, PREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION OF INDIGENOUS REGIMES, AND OPEN ACCESS FOR WESTERN INTERESTS TO PETROLEUM RESERVES AND RESOURCES. TO PROTECT THESE INTERESTS FRENCH MOVING ON VARIETY OF LEVELS: POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC, TO CREATE GREATER INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ARAB WORLD AND THEREBY TO ASSURE CONTINUING FRENCH INFLUENCE AND ACCESS.

3. IN POLITICAL TERMS, FRENCH HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN STRENGTHENING DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE, BY SUCH STEPS AS PROPOSAL TO ASSIGN RE-SIDENT AMBASSADOR TO ABU DHABI, BUT HAVE ALSO BEEN TAKING MORE ACTIVE ROLE ON SIDE OF MODERATE ARABS ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES. WHILE FRENCH WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO MAINTAIN THEIR POSITION AND INFLUENCE WITH MORE RADICAL ARAB STATES SUCH AS LIBYA, IRAQ AND SYRIA, THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THEIR INTERESTS IN REGION REST INCREASINGLY ON STABILIZING ROLE WHICH CONSERVATIVE MONARCHIAL REGIMES CAN PLAY. HIGH VISIBILITY INTEREST IN THESE REGIMES IS RELATIVELY NEW FEATURE OF FRENCH POLICY. GOF NOT ONLY SEEKS TO REINFORCE MODERATE ELEMENTS, BUT ALSO TO UNDERCUT LIBYAN INFLUENCE IN AREAS SUCH AS BLACK AFRICA WHICH INDEPENDENTLY ARE IMPORTANT FOR FRENCH INTERESTS. IN PLAYING THEIR POLITICAL CARDS, FRENCH HAVE EMPHASIZED WITH MODERATE ARABS THEIR COMMITMENT TO FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 242, AND HAVE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 14604 01 OF 02 250937 Z

SHOWN WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE VARIETY OF TACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND MODALITIES DESIGNED TO PROVIDE AT LEAST FACADE OF MOMENTUM TOWARDS SOLUTION.

4. GENERAL POLITICAL SYMPATHY FOR ARABS, HOWEVER, IS NOT ONLY DESIGNED TO CREATE CLIMATE OF STABILITY, BUT ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH FRENCH CAN PURSUE THEIR COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS.

THIS ELEMENT OF GOF POLICY WAS EVIDENT IN FEISAL VISIT WHERE RANGE OF ARMS SALES DISCUSSED AS WELL AS FRENCH COLOR TELEVISION SYSTEM AND CONCORDE SUPERSONIC AIRCRAFT. SIMILAR TALKS HAVE GONE ON WITH OTHER GULF STATES AND WILL CONTINUE. FRENCH BUSINESS INTERESTS, AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES, LIKELY TO BE INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN EFFORT TO CONVINCE ARABS OF ADVANTAGES OF FRENCH MILITARY AND OTHER TECHNOLOGIES. AIM WILL BE TO REDRESS EXISTING IMBALANCES IN TRADING RELATIONSHIP. FOR EXAMPLE, IN CASE OF SAUDI ARABIA, FRENCH IMPORTS ARE TWO AND ONE HALF TIMES EXPORTS.

5. WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY OF THIS HEIGHTENED FRENCH INTEREST IN SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN AND GULF? TO DEGREE GOF SUCCEEDS IN BECOMING PRIVILEGED FRIEND OF THESE STATES, FRANCE WILL BE COUNTRY TO WHICH THEY TURN FOR SUPPORT ON MIDDLE EAST AND OTHER ISSUES. FRANCE MAY THUS BECOME SPOKESMAN FOR THEIR INTERESTS. FRENCH ROLE COULD RUN UP AGAINST OUR OWN INDEPENDENT EFFORTS TO WORK TOWARDS DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELI. ON OTHER HAND, SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP AS IT DEVELOPS COULD ALSO BE MODERATING FACTOR, SINCE FRENCH BASIC INTEREST IS TO AVOID RESUMPTION OF ARAB- ISRAELI HOSTILITIES, LOCAL CONFLICTS IN GULF, OR PUNITIVE ARAB MEASURES AGAINST WESTERN OIL INTERESTS.

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO, ABU DHABI.

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PAGE 01 PARIS 14604 02 OF 02 250939 Z

11
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PARIS 14604

6. ON LEVEL OF COMMERCIAL AND MILITARY SALES, WE CAN, OF COURSE, EXPECT INCREASING COMPETITION. FRENCH HAVE PUSHED AND WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH AS VIGOROUSLY AS POSSIBLE SALES OF MIRAGES, AMX TANKS, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND HELICOPTERS, NOT TO MENTION THEIR TELEVISION SYSTEM AND CONCORDE SUPERSONIC AIRCRAFT. ARMS SALE POLICY WILL POSE PROBLEMS FOR US, NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE DIVERSIFICATION OF SOURCES OF ARMS PROCUREMENT MAY RESULT IN LOSS OF COMBAT EFFICIENCY IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES, BUT RATHER BECAUSE THERE WILL BE DANGER OF TRANSFER TO THIRD COUNTRIES, FOR EXAMPLE FROM ABU DHABI TO PAKISTAN, OR FROM SAUDI ARABIA TO EGYPT. AS LIBYAN MIRAGE DEAL HAS DEMONSTRATED, WHATEVER PAPER ASSURANCES FRENCH MAY GET ARE OF ONLY LIMITED USE WHEN ACTUAL CRUNCH COMES AND AIRCRAFT ARE MOVED FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER. OVER LONGER TERM, ONLY WAY TO MINIMIZE THIS PROBLEM WILL BE BY CONTINUED DIALOGUE WITH FRENCH ON NEED FOR
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PAGE 02 PARIS 14604 02 OF 02 250939 Z

ARMS BALANCE AND SIMULTANEOUS PURSUIT OF SOME KIND OF OVERALL ARMS LIMITATION FOR REGION INVOLVING NOT ONLY FRENCH BUT OTHER MAJOR SUPPLIERS AS WELL.

7. IN GENERAL, IT WOULD APPEAR DESIRABLE FOR US TO ACCEPT FRANCO- ARAB RELATIONSHIP FOR WHAT IT IS : A FRENCH POLICY DICTATED BY NATIONAL SELF- INTEREST. WE WILL HAVE LITTLE SUCCESS IN TRYING TO PULL FRENCH BACK TO MORE NEUTRAL OR BALANCED POSITIONS WHEN THEY BELIEVE THEY ARE PROTECTING THEIR INTERESTS, PARTICULARLY ACCESS TO OIL. ON OTHER HAND, WE MUST CONTINUE FIRMLY TO MAKE CLEAR OUR CONVICTION THAT ONE- SIDED PRO- ARAB APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST ISSUES WILL NOT WORK AND WILL NOT LEAD TO PEACE.

8. IN SUMMARY, FRENCH MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT CENTER OF GRAVITY IN ARAB WORLD IS MOVING TOWARDS GULF. WE WILL WANT TO ENCOURAGE FRANCE TO PLAY MODERATING ROLE AND TO USE THEIR GROWING INFLUENCE IN WAYS SUPPORTIVE OF OVERALL WESTERN INTERESTS. GIVEN FACT THAT THEY HAVE RELATIONS OF VARYING DEGREES OF INTIMACY WITH ALL STATES OF REGION, WE MAY BE ABLE TO ENGAGE THEM ON BEHALF OF MODERATE POLICIES. AS IN CASE OF IRAQ PETROLEUM NEGOTIATIONS, FRANCE WILL GO ITS OWN WAY ONLY TO A LIMITED DEGREE AND WILL BASICALLY CONTINUE TO SUPPORT WESTERN SOLIDARITY. THIS TENDENCY IN FRENCH M. E. POLICY NOT TO IGNORE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES IS ONE WE SHOULD TRY TO MAXIMIZE THROUGH CONTINUING PROCESS OF CONSULTATION AND FRANK DISCUSSION OF HOW AND WHERE OUR INTERESTS INTERACT.
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